Obligations to God

A Comprehensive Islamic View

يَاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا
فِى السِّلْمِ
كَآفَّةً

O You who believe! Enter into Islam in totality
[*Al-Baqarah* 2:208]

Dr. Israr Ahmad

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Duties of a Muslim - A Building Block Concept

Establishing the Total System of Islam (Third Level)

Passive Resistance | Active Resistance | Non-Violent Agitation

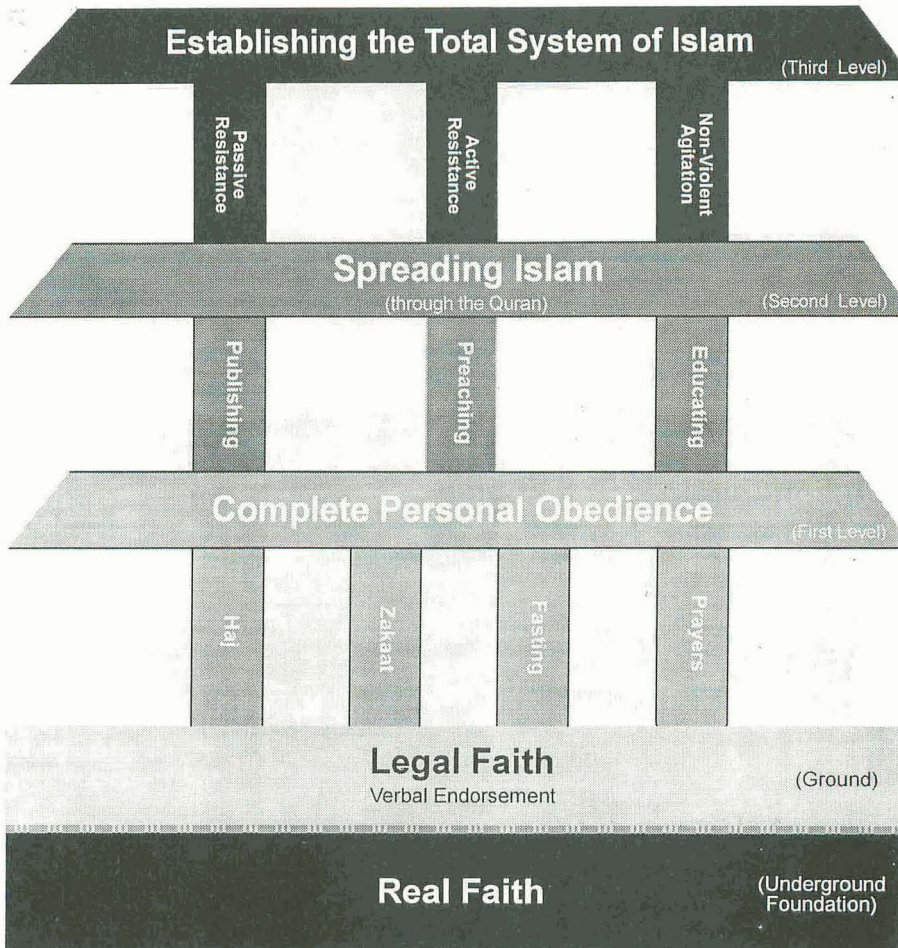
Spreading Islam (through the Quran) (Second Level)

Publishing | Preaching | Educating

Complete Personal Obedience (First Level)

Haj | Zakaat | Fasting | Prayers

Legal Faith
Verbal Endorsement (Ground)

Real Faith (Underground Foundation)

OBLIGATIONS TO GOD

A COMPREHENSIVE ISLAMIC VIEW

Dr. Israr Ahmad

(Translated and Abridged into English)

LAHORE
MARKAZI ANJUMAN KHUDDAM-UL-QUR'AN
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بسم اللہ الرحمٰن الرحیم

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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O You who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam. (*Al-i--'Imran* 3:102)

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me. (*Az-Zariyat* 51:56)

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

Thus We have made you a just nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger [Muhammad (SAW)] be a witness over you. (*Al-Baqarah* 2:143)

شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلدِّينِ مَا وَصَّىٰ بِهِۦ نُوحًا وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِۦٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰٓ أَنْ أَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا۟ فِيهِ

He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion which He ordained for Nuh (Noah), and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We ordained for Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus) saying you should establish religion and make no divisions in it. (*Ash-Shoora* 42:13)

Introduction

Let us first ascertain the significance of the topic under study through an example. Suppose someone has been employed to perform a certain number of tasks, and he does only half of the given tasks in a particular day. Even if he has performed his tasks efficiently, meticulously, sincerely and painstakingly, his job will remain undone. Furthermore, it is likely that the missed duties are the most important and vital ones to his company or employer. For this reason, we must reassess our obligations to God, since it is likely that our condition is not too different from the one in the above-mentioned example. Before commencing with the subject, however, let us understand its importance from yet another angle.

There are two main factors that determine one's actions: (1) Intentions and (2) Clarity of purpose. Intentions, no doubt, occupy the pride of place. These should be driven by our faith in God as the One True God without partners or associates, that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is His messenger, and that there will be reckoning in the life Hereafter. In the absence of one's intention to obey all of God's commands, it is futile to proceed further since it plays a central and decisive role in the worthiness of one's actions in Islam. Equally important is the related point that one should have a clear understanding of his/her responsibilities on the basis of which there will be a Reckoning. If one's understanding is limited or faulty, the performance will also be limited or faulty, resulting in potentially devastating consequences in the Hereafter.

I will therefore take this opportunity to elucidate a bird's eye view of our obligations as Muslims by developing a framework for understanding the entirety of Islam. This framework should prompt soul-searching,

self-reflection and criticism. It may be that our own priorities and concepts are upside-down, and the duties we neglect are the most important in the eyes of our Creator, depriving us of the essential tasks while we will rest content with the secondary duties. Let us not be like those who neglect the main obligations of our faith, remaining oblivious of our real duties under the delusion that we are observing the dictates of our faith in its totality. This misconception can only be corrected when we have a clear understanding of our duties.

My Concept of Religious Duties

In light of my limited study of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* and of the insights into faith flowing from it (all blessings are due to God), and which I strictly follow according to my capacity and understanding, I will narrate my understanding of the duties of a Muslim. By so doing I do not rule out the possibility that my understanding is imperfect. What is presented here is my understanding of our religious[1] duties, which I have learnt from my study of the Qur'an, *Seerah* and *Sunnah,* account of the companions, and our history in general.

There are three fundamental duties of a Muslim, and three prerequisites for fulfilling them (which will be discussed later on). While entering into our study, we must recognize that terminology has its own value and any real understanding of a branch of learning is obtained only through its own terminology. Islam has its specific

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[1] Usually the term religion is limited to the private affairs of the people. But here (and other places in this book) it includes the private as well as the public. Islam includes dogma, rituals and social customs at the private level as well as the political, social and economic system at the Public level. Therefore, in common use we describe Islam as a complete way of life. The arabic term for this is *Deen* which has no direct equivalent in English.

terminology and we will approach the subject at hand with reference to this terminology.

The first and foremost obligation of a Muslim to God is to submit to His commands at a personal level. The second obligation is to disseminate the message of Islam to others, and the third and final obligation is to strive to establish Islam as a complete socio-politico-economic system. We shall discuss each of these three duties one by one.

The First Duty - Personal Submission

The following four Qur'anic terms express the essence of personal submission in slightly different ways: Islam, obedience (*ita`ah*), abstinence (*taqwa*) and worship (*`ibadah*).

1. Islam

Islam is the most basic of these four terms. Literally it means to completely surrender, to give up resistance, and unquestioningly obey Divine commandments. The Qur'an requires of us that we enter Islam wholly:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱدْخُلُوا۟ فِى ٱلسِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً

O ye who believe! Enter into Islam wholly (*Al-Baqarah* 2:208)

There is no such thing as partial acceptance of Islam or partial obedience to God. It is unacceptable to obey certain commands and disregard others. If one is not prepared for an attitude of total submission then he/she must choose another path. Islam represents a case of "take

it all or leave it all". There cannot be any compromise in this principle.

2. Obedience (*ita`ah*)

Obedience represents the spirit of Islam from an enhanced perspective. While Islam signifies surrender and giving up any resistance, obedience denotes one's willing submission in an active and positive sense. One's resolve to observe the dictates of faith willingly is branded as obedience. The Qur'anic position is:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ
الْمُبِينُ

> "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, the duty of our Messenger is only to convey clearly." (*At-Taghabun:* 64:12)

What is stated in the definition of Islam also lies at the core of obedience (*ita`ah*), which is the "all or none" law. The Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (SAW), had the duty of conveying the Divine message, a duty that he discharged in an exemplary fashion. If one who has received the message turns away from it, he/she will be solely responsible for this defiance and rebellion. There is no room for partial obedience.

3. Abstinence (*taqwa*)

The term abstinence approaches the concept of Islam from the opposite direction of *`ita`ah*. Whereas obedience represents an active and positive response to the requirements of Islam (submission), abstinence is its active but negative dimension. Implicit in the term are the following connotations:. Avoiding any disobedience to divine commands, shunning any disobedience to God,

entertaining the fear of His displeasure and striving for avoiding His punishment. *Taqwa* is a very comprehensive attitude and it is difficult to define this term in a single expression. The Qur'an comprehensively uses the term *Taqwa* in the following *ayah*:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِۦ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

> O believers! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam. (*Al-i-'Imran* 3:102)

4. Worship (*`ibadah*)

This is perhaps the most comprehesive term regarding personal submission. As a term it might be defined as, "To surrender oneself completely *out of love*". The Qur'an declares that the very purpose of the creation of human beings is to worship God, a point made in *ayah* 56 of *Surah Az-Zariyat*:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

> I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me. (*Az-Zariyat* 51:56)

The Arabic word "*`ibadah*" stands for both worshipping and praising, embracing the twin connotations of obedience and love. A person's relationship with God is similar to the relationship between a master and his slave. A slave by definition submits his/her entire life to the will of the master. The distinction between a slave and a servant is crucial to understanding this concept. A slave is at the master's beck and call twenty-four hours of the day, fulfilling every command, whereas a servant is merely an employee who

is there for part of the day and then free to live as he/she desires. The former serves the master all the time and constantly, while the latter merely fulfils the terms of a mutually agreed upon contract. If a servant has chosen to work as a clerk, he/she is not obliged to do any other task unless there is an amendment to the contract and salary. Furthermore, a servant who is employed for particular hours will be paid overtime salary if asked to stay longer, and has the option of refusing to do so. The Persian poet, Sheikh Sa'di, draws attention to this truth in his profound couplet:

زندگی آمد برائے بندگی
زندگی بے بندگی شرمندگی

Life has come for slavery
Life devoid of slavery is shame

Let us be absolutely clear that God's servitude alone does not constitute worship. It should be permeated by extreme love and devotion.

Partial Obedience is Unacceptable

It must be clear by now that Islam does not admit partial obedience, but demands complete submission. Reference has already been made to *ayah* 208 of *Surah al-Baqarah,* which asks the believers to enter into the fold of Islam completely. There is another Qur'anic *ayah* that brings home this point even more emphatically. Although this *ayah* addresses the Jews, it should be borne in mind that God's principles are not different for the Muslims. The Qur'an projects the Jews as an example to show that if the Muslims behave in the same manner, their fate shall be no different. The Qur'an says:

أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ ۚ فَمَا جَزَآءُ مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَٰلِكَ
مِنكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْىٌ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَيَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَـٰمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰٓ أَشَدِّ ٱلْعَذَابِ ۗ
وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَـٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

Then do you believe in a part of the Scripture, and reject the rest? Then what is the recompense of those who do so among you, except disgrace in this life? And on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous torment. For Allah is not unmindful of what you do. (*Al-Baqarah* 2:85)

The Jews stand cursed for their partial and selective obedience to God's commands, an attitude of hypocrisy and duality of behavior that is unacceptable in Islam. In contrast, God demands total and exclusive devotion. The Qur'an emphatically condemns hypocrisy is the following *ayah*:

إِنَّ ٱلْمُنَـٰفِقِينَ فِى ٱلدَّرْكِ ٱلْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ وَلَن تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا

Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of Hellfire. You will find no help for them. (*An-Nisa* 4:145)

Those familiar with the contents of the Qur'an realize that God's wrath is directed more against the hypocrites than against the unbelievers. Another profound illustration of this is in the following *ayah*:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَن
تَقُولُوا۟ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

> O believers! Why do you say that which you do not. Most hateful it is with Allah that you do say that which you do not do (*As-Saff* 61:2-3)

In light of our reasoning thus far, it is easy to appreciate that entering into Islam is not necessarily a bed of roses, particularly in this world. Perhaps this is why Allama MuhammadIqbal has said:

چوں ی گویم مسلمانم بہ لرزم
کہ دانم مشکلاتِ لا الٰہ را

When I proclaim that I am a Muslim, I shudder
For I am cognizant of the demands of faith

Pillars of Islam and Their Importance

To recapitulate, our first and foremost duty is to practice our faith by accepting and fulfilling all of our obligations. For this purpose, four terms are employed: (1) Islam, (2) Obedience (*ita`ah*) (3) Abstinence (*taqwa*), and (4) Worship (*`ibadah*). Of these, Worship (*`ibadah*) is the most Comprehensive term since it stands for total and unrelenting subservience to God out of His love. We have also elucidated the perilous state of hypocrisy and that total submission as desired in Islam might not be as simple as is prevalent today in the popular imagination. However, God has been gracious to confer upon us four modes of worship, which if performed diligently can make the task easy. It is reported on the authority of Abdullah ibn `Umar that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Islam is based upon five things, testifying that there is no god besides Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, establishing the Prayer, paying *zakah*, performing the pilgrimage and fasting the month of

Ramadan. On uttering the above creedal testimony, one enters the fold of Islam and remains in its fold by practically observing the other four tenets. Together, these five have become to be commonly known as the "pillars of Islam". We inadvertently call the last four as *`ibadaat*, whereas these are actually the exercises that are to generate within us the spirit of *`ibadah*. The Qur'an does not use the term *`ibadah* for any of these modes of worship. Rather, it reserves the term *`ibadah* for describing the holistic concept and attitude that has been presented earlier.

To summarize, worship signifies immense love for God and His subservience in our overall attitude, behavior and ambitions. The above-mentioned modes of worship prepare the believer mentally for the fulfillment of such a life and help remove the obstructions in the path of faith and its practice. Thus the divine directive for prayers is that one should suspend his/her worldly activities five times a day and stand before God to affirm: "We worship only You and we seek assistance only from You." This affirmation renews our relationship with the Divine. The Qur'an describes the wisdom and purpose of prayers by saying: "Offer prayers for remembering Me." By keeping the remembrance of God fresh in the minds of those who pray, it protects them from falling into forgetfulness and indifference. By the same token, *zakah* has been prescribed so that one should be purged from the love of wealth, which can be potentially fatal for one's moral and spiritual health and the root cause of many evils. Fasting has been prescribed so that one may develop a sense of *taqwa* or abstinence, enhancing the ability to avoid disobedience. The human self is prone to weaknesses. Fasting helps one to be protected from the unbridled desires of the self. All the blessings accruing from these "modes of worship" appear in their combined form in the religious duty of *Hajj*. The *Hajj* includes prayer (the remembrance of God,

the *ihmram* which has restrictions resembling fasting, and the expenses that are incurred resembling the *zakah*. In summary, these four pillars of Islam have been prescribed not as the essence of the Islamic teachings, but as the basic edifice upon which the structure of Islam can be erected. These pillars act as the ramparts for faith. God has done us a great favor by giving us these methods for conditioning ourselves for His service.

Let us now turn attention to the second duty of conveying the message of Islam to others.

The Second duty - Taking the Message of Islam to Others

Whereas our first obligation was at the individual and personal level, the second obligation has to do with reaching out to others. As in the first case, the Qur'an uses several terms to describe this duty. There are again four terms that are worthy of our special attention.

1. Preaching (*tableegh*)

This literally means taking the message to others. Islam will reach far and wide only when it is taken far and wide by those who profess to believe in it. God enjoined the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in the following manner:

﴿يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ﴾

> O Messenger! Proclaim which has been sent to you from your Lord. (*Al-Maida* 5:67)

Likewise, the Prophet (SAW) has instructed us to convey his message (even if it is a single *ayah*) to others:

بَلِّغُوا عَنِّى وَلَوْ آيَةً

And convey on my behalf, even if it is a single *ayah*.

On the occasion of his farewell pilgrimage he entrusted the responsibility of preaching to the Muslim community with the words:

فَلْيُبَلِّغِ الشَّاهِدُ الْغَائِبَ

Those present here should convey this message to those who are not here.

2. Calling others to Islam (*da`wah*)

Da`wah means calling others to Islam. God says:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّن دَعَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا
وَقَالَ إِنَّنِى مِنَ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ

And who is better in speech than he who calls men to Allah and does righteous deeds and says I am one of the Muslims. (*Fussilat* 41:33)

And in *Surah An-Nahl*:

ٱدْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِٱلْحِكْمَةِ وَٱلْمَوْعِظَةِ ٱلْحَسَنَةِ وَجَٰدِلْهُم بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ
أَحْسَنُ

Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in

> Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in a way that is better. (*An-Nahl* 16:125)

3. Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil (*`amr bil ma`ruf wa nahi `anil munkar*)

Amr bil ma'ruf wa nahi 'anil munkar is a very important Qur'anic term and is performed at different levels. If one has authority and power, evil should forcibly be stopped, and if not then it should be spoken out against. If there is fear that even speaking out against it might cause more harm than good, then the least that can be done is to detest it from the core of the heart. These levels of *`amr bil ma`ruf wa nahi `anil munkar* have clearly been described in a *Hadith* on the authority of Abi Sa'eed al Khudri which is cited by Muslim:

مَنْ رَاى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهٖ فَاِنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهٖ فَاِنْ لَّمْ
يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهٖ وَذٰلِكَ اَضْعَفُ الْاِيْمَان (رواہ مسلم: عن ابی سعید الخدریؓ)

> Whosoever among you observes some evil, it is his duty to stop it by his hand, if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue, and if he is unable to do even this, he should condemn it in his heart, but this represents the weakest degree of faith.

In another *hadith,* the concluding words are that there is no faith beyond this point. What is meant is that if one witnesses evil, oppression, or clearly forbidden acts and it does not make him/her shake from inside even in the slightest, the person is devoid of the light of faith:

... وَلَيْسَ وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الْاِيْمَانِ حَبَّةُ خَرْدَلٍ

Such is the ruling by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself. Who can dare deny his religious opinion or *fatwa*?

4. Being Witnesses unto Mankind (*shahadah `ala an-naas*)

This fourth term most comprehensively describes the nature of our second religious obligation. It stands for being God's witness over the people so that one may affirm and testify on the Day of Judgment that the duty of conveying the message to others and adequately representing the Divine commands had been duly performed. In performing this duty one becomes representation of God's messengers, since it was this very task that has been defined as the mission of the messengers themselves, a point clearly made in the following *ayah*:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِن كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ شَهِيدًا

> How then, when we brought from each people and we bring you as a witness against these people? (*An-Nisa* 4:41)

On the Day of Judgment, the Messenger will testify that he had preached the Divine message to them, thereby absolving him of any responsibility for the conduct of their actions in this world. Let us reflect on this whether this testification by the Prophet (SAW) will be in favor of or against the Muslims. By any measure of the yardstick, this testimony will be against us. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) will affirm in God's court that he had faithfully conveyed divine message to the people. It was, in turn, the responsibility of the people to preach it to others. It is very clearly and forcefully stated in the following *ayah* that Muslims, who are raised as the "best community" for all of

mankind, owe the responsibility of being the witnesses for all of humanity:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا

> Thus we have made of you an *Ummah*, justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over all peoples, and the messenger a witness over you. (*Al-Baqarah* 2:143)

After personal submission, this testimony before all of mankind is the most important duty prescribed for the Muslims. We should grasp its natural base the consequents of our lives and the priorities we have chosen for ourselves while we claim to be members of this *ummah* and followers of Muhammad (SAW). Had the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) not conveyed the Divine message, God would have taken him to task. Since he has faithfully and effectively conveyed divine message he stands free of any burden of the deeds of those who claim to be his followers. He left for his heavenly abode after entrusting this duty to the Muslim community. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had been sent down as the messenger for the entire mankind, not just the Arabs. This point comes very sharply at several places in the Qur'an. For example, it is said in *Surah As-Saba* that he was sent as warner and bearer of glad tidings for the whole mankind. In *Surah Al -A'araf*, it is declared that he is the Messenger for all peoples. Almost the same point occurs in *Surah Al-Anbiya*, where he is spoken of as mercy unto all of the worlds. If this task was his alone, then it does not make any sense that his life ended before his mission was complete. The fact of the matter is that he entrusted this responsibility on the Muslim *ummah* (as pointed out earlier that on the occasion

of the farewell pilgrimage he entrusted his duty to the whole Muslim community). If this community of believers fails to deliver the goods, it will be condemned not only for its own failure, but also for the errors and failures of all of humanity. Others will be perfectly justified in making the plea on the Day of Judgment that Muslims, though blessed with the final and complete Divine message, faith, *shariah,* and despite being members of the final Messenger's community, not only failed to convey this message to them but misrepresented the message altogether, thus making it unappealing and repulsive.

I shall be failing in my duty as a sincere adviser to you, if I do not caution you against forgetting the very purpose of our being bound together in the form of an *ummah.* Oversight in this can lead to grave consequences on the Last Day. Can any one give me a satisfactory reply to the question that during the final accountability when we are interrogated about our duty of *shahadah `ala an-naas,* what answer we will possibly have? We happen to be members of the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) community. We possess his teachings and the Qur'an, the very Word of God. It goes without saying that we will not have any excuse or defense on this count. We will be certainly held responsible for our failure to convey the Divine message to others. Sadly, far from preaching Islamic faith and adequately representing it to others as a community, it is our misfortune and plight that we ourselves are unable to practice sound faith and character as individuals. We are Muslims only by birth and in name only. As Iqbal puts it:

یوں تو سیّد بھی ہو، مرزا بھی ہو، افغان بھی ہو!
تم سبھی کچھ ہو، بتاؤ تو مسلمان بھی ہو؟

You might be a Syed, Mirza, or Afghan
You might be all, but are you a Muslim?

The Third Duty - Establishing Islam

Let us turn to the third and final duty - establishing Islam as a complete way of life. Preaching the creed and ideas of Islam at a dogmatic level is one thing, but calling others to join together in establishing it as a practical reality is something completely different. There is a world of difference between these two. Since Islam is a complete way of life, a point explicitly made in the Qur'an, its very existence is meaningless unless it is established as such and its limits enforced in regulating the collective affairs of the people. We take great pride in claiming that Islam represents a comprehensive code of conduct. There is hardly a single Muslim who is not persuaded of the verity of this statement. It is generally believed that Islam offers guidance in all walks of life. At least, the readers of our writings are in general fully cognizant of these facts. However, it is intriguing that no practical steps are taken for enforcing it at the level of the state and civil authority. We are prone to pay mere lip service to the comprehensive nature of our religion in the form of catch phrases or clichés meant for publicity or for earning praise. In a sense, Islam is a religion only if its injunctions are enforced and its morality is established in society, otherwise, it represents at best a utopia, having nothing to do with ground realities.

Following the trend in describing Qur'anic terminologies for the other two duties, four Qur'anic terms bring out the Qur'anic injunctions of this third duty as well. Of these, two terms come in *Makki Surahs* and two in *Madani Surahs:*

1. Supremacy of the Lord (*Takbeer-e-Rabb*)

This is the first of the terms that has come in the *Makki* Qur'an. The Qur'an says:

وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

> And make your Lord Supreme. (*Al-Mudathir* 74:3)

The Qur'anic expression employed in the above *ayah* literally means that God's supremacy is established on earth. It is not easy to grasp the gravity of this statement at a glance. However, since humanity by and large does not recognize God's Supereminence, the Qur'anic command is that He be recognized by humanity. The command and authority (*hukm*) belongs only to Allah in the ultimate sense. Iqbal draws attention to the same truth by asserting:

سروری زیبا فقط اس ذات بے ہمتا کو ہے
حکمراں ہے اک وہی باقی بتان آزری

Sovereignty befits only that Irresistible Essence,
He is the sole ruler, the rest are idols of Azar

Taken in this sense Allah's grandeur is not recognized in the world presently. Humanity has usurped power and sovereignty and insists on enforcing its own will to regulate human interaction, exchange and governance, remaining oblivious of His greatness and true right as Sovereign. Everyone betrays this attitude. Only in the call to prayer (*adhan*) can it be heard that indeed God is great, and perhaps as lip service in public meetings. However, in reality we do not recognize and concede His greatness as a living force in our lives, which is clear by the fact that His will, as dictated to us in our Scriptures, is not

enforced anywhere. In our public life and institutions we do not recognize Allah's absolute sovereignty. It is our duty as Muslims that all authority and power be vested in Him and His judgment accepted unquestioningly. Only a true Islamic system that protects the commands of God and ensures the morality, ethics, brotherhood, sisterhood, and code of conduct (taught by Islam, will signify in real terms Allah's glory and greatness.

The first command sent down to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in the first revelation was to read in the name of his Lord. In this first revelation, he was not asked to take the message of Islam to others or to establish Gods Glory in its entire splendor. The emphasis was on reciting, a point illustrated by the opening *ayaat* of *Surah Al-Alaq,* which are also the very first *ayaat* of the Qur'an to be revealed:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِى خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنسَـٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِى عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَـٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

> Read in the name of your Lord and Cherisher Who created man, out of mere clot of congeal blood. Recite and your Lord is most Bountiful. He Who taught the use of the pen and taught the man that he knew not. (*Al-'Alaq* 96:1-5).

Another set of *ayaat* that are also amongst the earliest revelations are of *Surah Al-Mudathir.* In these *ayaat,* The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is addressed directly as:

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾

> O you wrapped up in a mantle. Arise and warn the people, and make your Lord Supreme! (*Al-Mudathir* 74:1-3)

This address involves the very first command (not the first revelation) to the Prophet (SAW) to arise from his condition of meditation and begin his second obligation of taking the message to the people. The second command comes in the very next *ayah* and it involves the third obligation of making his Lord Supreme (or establishing the religion as a concrete reality). Since Muhammad (SAW) is a messenger to all of humanity, he himself was obliged to respond to these commands by taking the message to all of humanity and establishing Islam over all peoples. Those lying in slumber of negligence should be told clearly that it is not all about the life in this world, rather the real life has to begin after death - a life that is everlasting:

وَمَا هَٰذِهِ ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱلدَّارَ ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ لَهِىَ ٱلْحَيَوَانُ ۚ لَوْ كَانُوا۟ يَعْلَمُونَ

And this life of the world is only an amusement and a play! Verily, the abode in the Hereafter is indeed the real living, if they only knew. (*Al-Ankabut* 29:64)

The Prophet (SAW) told mankind clearly that the real abode is the Hereafter. Likewise, he warned them against the approaching Day of Judgment, when everyone will stand before the Lord for reckoning:

أَلَا يَظُنُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَنَّهُم مَّبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤﴾ لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥﴾ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ ٱلنَّاسُ لِرَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

Do they not think that they will be resurrected on a mighty day, a day when (all) mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds? (*Al-Mutaffifin* 83:4-6)

Human beings should not suffer from the delusion that the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) warning is hollow. The Day of Judgment is an undeniable reality and on that Day the real winners and losers will be decided:

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ ٱلْجَمْعِ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ ٱلتَّغَابُنِ ۗ

> The Day when He will assemble you (all) on the day of assembly, that will be the Day of mutual loss and gain. (*At-Taghabun* 64:9)

This warning of the Hereafter marked the starting point of the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) call and struggle. So if this was the starting point, what was the culminating point of his mission in this world? His ultimate goal, the culminating point, was to instate Allah's greatness beyond the level of hypothetical dogmatic assertions - as concrete reality. It is for anybody to decide that in his Prophetic career of twenty-three years whether he accomplished this mission or not. One is compelled to concede the fact that he did implement the commands of God and established His supremacy in toto within the Arabian Peninsula.

Let us not lose sight of the point that this duty of establishing Allah's Supereminence on earth was entrusted to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) only when he had been elevated to the august office. I make this point in particular in recognition of the stance of some Qur'anic scholars that the first five verses of the *Surah Al-'Alaq* mark the beginning of his "Prophethood", whereas the first seven verses of *Surah Al-Mudaththir* inaugurate his "Messengerhood". (Indeed only God knows best).

2. Establishing Islam (Iqamatud Deen)

This duty of establishing Islam is specifically mentioned in the *Makkan Sura Al-Shoorah*:

أَنْ أَقِيمُواْ ٱلدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُواْ فِيهِ

That you establish the religion and make no divisions therein. *(Ash-Shoora 42:13)*

The expression employed in the verse is especially used for making something stand upright. When something is laying flat on the ground, then it makes sense to ask that it be made "upright". Whose responsibility is it to make something that has fallen down, stand upright? Is it not the duty of those who profess to believe in the reality and truth of the matter? If Islam is already established as a system the believers are obliged to keep it in tact, keep it firmly upright. If it is lying shattered on the ground, they are obliged to establish it. The economy, social life, political system and all public institutions should be in accordance with the dictates of Islam and under Divine authority. Only then it may be said that Islam is established. Otherwise, it should be clear that Divine revelation is not merely for recitation and praise. It is clearly said in the Qur'an:

قُلْ يَـٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُواْ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ

Say: O people of the Book! You have nothing unless you establish the Law of the Gospels and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord. *(Al-Maidah* 5:68)

Once again, the same word 'to establish' occurs in the above *ayah* and even though it refers to the Jews and

Christians, it nevertheless serves the purpose of an example for the Muslims, who are required to establish the commands of the Qur'an. Since the Qur'an is a guide to human life in all its respects, it must be enforced as a collective system. It is the responsibility of the Muslims to live in accordance with the Qur'anic teachings individually as well as collectively. These are the implications of the third duty.

3. Supereminence of Islam (*Ad-deenu kulluhu lillah*)

This term is of the *Madinan* period and comes in two *Madinan Surahs* - *Al-Baqarah* and *Al-Anfal*:

وَقَـٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ لِلَّهِ

> And fight them on until there is no more tumult (or oppression) and the religion is Allah's. (*Al-Baqarah* 2:193)

This idea is extended further in the following *ayah* of *Surah Al-Anfal*:

وَقَـٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ كُلُّهُۥ لِلَّهِ

> And fight them on until there is no more tumult (or oppression) and there prevail justice and faith in Allah alone." (*Al-Anfal* 8:39)

The fragmentation of religion is forbidden, and this point can only be understood if the meaning of religion is understood in its complete and holistic capacity. We might be offering Prayers, fasting, paying *Zakah*, performing *Hajj* and *'Umrahs*, but if the political system governing the country has no place for Islam, economic matters are decided without any reference to Islamic economic teachings, rather excuses are rapidly put

forward to avoid implementation of Islam, it means that there is no Islam, since partial obedience is tantamount to disobedience. Having reservations in enforcing Islamic penal laws and declaring the segregation of the sexes as an unacceptable practice in modern times (rather prescribing to the equal social role of the sexes with no regard for female modesty[2]), is sheer hypocrisy, not Islam. We seem to be more concerned with appeasing a particular section of the society while having little or no regard for displeasing God and in the process incurring His wrath. In this way, the Muslims of today have fragmented the Islamic teachings into segments; there are some teachings that we consider as essential and there are those teachings that are no longer applicable simply because they appear to be impractical, outdated, inconvenient, or simply embarrassing when viewed in terms of the current trends in society! How ironic is in that although Pakistan established the *Shari`ah* court on the one hand, certain matters such as Muslim family law were declared as beyond its jurisdiction. This position was adopted notwithstanding the obvious fact that family laws have been legislated in detail in the Qur'an. These laws occur in several Qur'anic *Surahs*. Even the British rulers did not dare temper with Islamic family laws, nor did they touch our personal law. To our misfortune, Islamic family laws have been mutilated in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan at the hands of Muslims after the departure of the colonialists. After the imposition of martial law, these distorted un-Islamic laws were forcibly applied and strengthened with the passage of time. It is deplorable that the Muslims have accomplished what was

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[2] In Islam man and woman are equal on the basis of human dignity. Islam also considers them equal in their capacity to spiritually rise and attain God's pleasure. But when it comes to their social role in this world, Islam has given them different responsibilities.

unthinkable even by the non-Muslims out of respect for our faith. This we did shortly after God gave us political freedom and sovereignty.

It emerges clearly from the above-quoted extracts of *Surahs Al-Baqarah* and *Al-Anfal* that loyalty should wholly be for God. This very point was emphasized in our discussion on the concept of worship (*`ibadah*) that it is an all-embracing activity covering every aspect of our lives.

4. Ascendancy of Islam (izharu deenil haqq `ala ad-deen kullihi)

The fourth term in this context appears in the following *ayah* of *Surah Al-Saff*, which represents also the central subject matter of the whole *Surah:*

هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُۥ بِٱلْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ ٱلْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِۦ

> It is He, who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the true religion (Islam) to make it victorious over all way of life. *(As-Saff* 61:9)

Same wordings (without any difference in the slightest) also appear in *Sura At-Tawbah* and *Al-Fath.* In *Surah Al-Tawbah* and *As-Saff,* the *ayah* concludes with the words: "Though it may displease the *Mushrikeen*[3]" while in *Surah Al-Fath* it ends with: "And Allah suffices as a witness." Although each of these endings carries great significance, the point to be made here is that the term (*izharu deenil haqq*) can be readily appreciated with reference to these three *ayaat.*

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[3] Those who associate others with Allah.

A Summary of Our Religious Obligations

Let us not be overwhelmed or distracted by the increasing number of the terms in our discussion. Our attempt has been to present the message in as simple, concise and plain a manner as possible. To recap, our first and the foremost religious obligation is that we practice faith ourselves. The second is that we should preach and spread the message to others, and the third is that we strive to establish the teachings of this message as a collective reality and politico-socio-economic system. These are the three Islamic duties that are binding on us.

Let us now visualize these obligations in the form of a three-storied building. The creedal statement (to testify oneness of God and Muhammad (SAW) as His messenger) is like the visible part of the foundation, above ground[4], while Prayer, *Zakah, Hajj* and Fasting are four pillars upon which the actual structure of the building rests. The building has three floors represented by each one of the three duties defined above. A pictorial representation of the building summarizing our religious duties is shown on the inside cover of this booklet. If one appreciates this concept of our duties, his understanding of Islam is sound and clear. Contrarily, if one thinks of duties in the traditional narrow and restricted sense of Prayers, *Zakah, Hajj* and Fasting only , he/she is concerned only with the pillars, having no idea that these are merely the supports upon which the essence of Islam stands. These are means, not ends in themselves. Furthermore, let us not miss the obvious point that a structure having only pillars can at best be regarded as ruins of a bygone era. One important point here is that the foundation has two

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[4] The invisible part underground, represents real, heart-felt faith within the believer which is full of conviction and has no shadow of doubt in it .

parts, a visible part and an invisible part. The visible part is the testification with the tongue, whereas the invisible part goes deep into the ground. Without a deep foundation, the building will be unstable and a minor earthquake or wind will be able to knock it down. The invisible part of the foundation is conviction of the heart.

As for the floors, the first floor is that of personal submission. Unless one personally submits to God and His Messenger (SAW), how can he be expected to preach God's message to others? After personal submission, one can rise to the second floor of taking the message of Islam to others. Finally, when enough people are convinced of the just system of Islam, they can join together to strive to establish its teachings at the collective level of human life, which is the third and the final floor of the building of Islam. Let us now turn towards some pre-requisites to fulfilling these religious obligations.

Three Pre-Requisites for our Islamic Duties

Just as there are three levels of obligations to God, there are three pre-requisites to fulfilling these obligations. A pre-requisite is not an obligation in itself, but it is something in the absence of which an obligation is impossible to fulfill, thereby making it an indirect obligation. This is easily understood by drawing an analogy to the prayer. Since ablution (*wudu*) is essential for prayer, it is an indirect obligation in Islam, but only so because prayer is the real obligation, without which there would be no need for the ablution per say.

The First Pre-Requisite - *Jihad*

In order to fulfill our obligations to God, it is essential to strive in His cause (which is the literal meaning of *Jihad*). This is the starting point and also the culminating

point. Nothing can be accomplished without making sincere and concerted effort. Likewise, Muslims are supposed to strive in the light of their faith. The clashes that take place as a result of this striving (which might be of multiple natures such as personal and internal, psychological, ideological or even physical) are called "Jihad". Let us discuss the term Jihad with reference to its three basic and fundamental demands.

1. Striving Against One's Own Self (*jihad ma`a an-nafs*)

This *Jihad* relates to our first obligation of personal submission. The question arises that what can possibly the *Jihad* be when one is submitting to God as an individual? The obvious answer is that one has to wage *Jihad*, a fierce battle, against one's own self. One will have to strive hard to make his/her self sub-servant to the commands of God. The human self is vulnerable and prone to transgressing on the basis of the uncontrollable desires of his material existence:

إِنَّ ٱلنَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌۢ بِٱلسُّوٓءِ

> The (human) soul is certainly prone to evil. (*Yousuf* 12:53)

First of all one has to bring these desires under the control of his/her real self, the soul that was breathed into each and every one of us by God himself. For example, at dawn, there is *Adhan* signifying God's call to Prayer, but the self desires the sweet sleep of the early morning hours. If one has control over one's self, one will be able to overcome this physical desire in favor of a spiritual one and will rise to pray. A failure to do so might ultimately lead to total disregard of one's duties in favor of this-worldly pursuits of wealth, luxuries and personal

gratification at the material level. The struggle against the self is, in fact, the foremost and perhaps most vital stage of *Jihad*. The following *Hadith* demonstrates the importance of the struggle against one's own self:

اَلْمُجَاهِدُ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهٗ (رواہ الترمذی: عن فضالہ بن عبیدؓ)

The real *mujahid*[5] is one who strives against the desires of his/her material existence.

It is therefore evident from the above *Hadith* that the primary level of *Jihad* and its starting point is to fight against one's own material self and try to control and subjugate it.

2. Jihad Through Qur'an (*Jihad Bil Qur'an*)

This *Jihad* corresponds to our second religious obligation, that of taking the message of Islam to others. When one enters the field of inviting others to faith, countless obstacles come in the path to spread the word of truth. Striving against these obstacles is *Jihad,* but more at the conceptual level. Many ideologies such as atheism, materialism, fascism, communism and other faith and belief systems are poised to confront every effort of yours. Forces representing unbelief are very well entrenched throughout society - a reality that truly dawns only when one enters the struggle to confront them with the pristine light of Islam. However this confrontation is purely on an ideological and philosophical level. Our wealth and energy must be invested in this battle. When Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was calling towards monotheism, Abu Jahl and his followers were defending polytheism and

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[5] One who strives in the cause of God.

idolatry. This eventually led to a bitter encounter between them. Do you honestly think that if there is a struggle to preach faith, invite others to the path of Islam, enjoin good and forbid evil, and act as a witnesses of God unto mankind, that atheism and disbelief will fold in their cards all at once without offering any resistance? It is a folly to assume that the forces of falsehood will vanish into thin air. It should be known clearly that there will ensue a long drawn out ideological battle whenever there is a call for Islam in the real sense. Thus this represents a more difficult or advanced stage in *Jihad* than the first one. In the first stage man engages in a *Jihad* against his own self, but at this stage he must confront the forces outside of himself - forces of falsehood, atheism, permissiveness and wrong ideologies. Note that the first struggle (against one's own self) intensifies as these challenges are confronted. As to the instrument to be employed in this *Jihad,* God guides Muslims to wage this *Jihad* with the help of the Qur'an:

وَجَٰهِدْهُم بِهِۦ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا

> But strive against them with this (Qur'an) a truly great struggle! (*Al-Furqan* 25:52)

God makes plain that the Qur'an stands out as a sword that is capable of rooting out each and every false 'ism'. The Qur'an is described here in terms of a weapon. Iqbal voices the same view when he says that with the sword of the Qur'an Satan himself can be conquered:

کشتنِ ابلیس کارے مشکل است
زانکہ او گم اندر اعماقِ دل است
خوشتر آں باشد مسلمانش کنی
کشتۂ شمشیرِ قرآنش کنی

Since in the battle against the self, Satan is your baser self's ally and he whispers in the depths of the heart, if a real sword is used, one will end up killing oneself rather than Satan. Therefore, in order to defeat him, a special sword needs to be used that slices through the heart, killing Satan whereas leaving the heart intact and pure, and this is the sword of Qur'an! God has blessed the Muslims with this mighty and effective sword, which represents the greatest miracle granted to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is a pity that we treat the Qur'an as a mere object around which we can perform our rituals rather than making it a living entity to be used in this dynamic fashion.

Therefore, in this stage of *Jihad,* Muslims should equip themselves intellectually and ideologically by means of the Qur'an. They are supposed to uphold and establish truth and in so doing they should expend their money and physical resources to spread the light of Qur'an. They will have to use both the tongue and the pen in order to fulfill the requirements of taking the message of Islam to others. They have to employ all the modern mediums of communication and the facilities of the mass media in order to promote and circulate the Qur'anic call and teachings.

3. To Fight in the Cause of Allah (*Jihad Bis-Saif*)

The third and final level of *Jihad* corresponds to the third and final religious obligation of establishing Islam as a socio-politico-economic reality. At this stage, *Jihad* reaches its zenith, for it stands for an open conflict in the battlefield against the forces that represent other ideologies. At the stage of calling and inviting people to the path of Islam, one is faced with an ideological and

intellectual battle. However, in the stage of enforcing Islam at the collective level, there is a conflict with the forces of immorality. They will naturally obstruct, rather obliterate, the efforts for enforcing Islam in public life in a desperate effort to maintain the status quo in which they have their vested interests. They will not easily bear with a situation in which Islam gains ascendancy. There are privileged classes in every system based upon a false ideology. They govern public life and reap the benefits of power and authority, and they will never take kindly to the efforts for depriving them of their sway. Therefore, confrontation is inevitable at the physical level, in spite of winning the battle at the ideological level. This final confrontation will be in multiple stages. The first level is of passive resistance, the second of active resistance (agitation or challenging the system in the form of civil disobedience) and the third one is physical confrontation (which today might take the form of unarmed revolt against the system). If people of faith lack the material resources (human or otherwise), they should restrain themselves to passively resisting persecution and slander as they wage their ideological battle. As a strategic move they should not initiate any physical revolt against the system. We find that this was the policy that was followed by the Prophet (SAW) and his companions during the Makkan period. The believers were directed to bear all kinds of persecution, violence and oppression. They were not allowed to retaliate in the same coin, but were asked to bear it patiently. Their example is perhaps the highest representation of passive resistance witnessed in human history. However, after gaining enough strength and resources, the believers are obliged to launch an offensive against the status quo. Those who were forbidden from taking an initiative in Makkah were permitted in Madinah to wage war according to the following *ayah* of the Qur'an:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا۟ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they have been wronged. And verily, Allah is most powerful for the aid. (Al-Hajj 22:39)

Armed conflict is the final stage of this struggle and in the fulfillment of our ultimate obligation to God - to make a society whose principles are based on His commands - a society based on justice and fair play. It has already been pointed out with reference to *Surah As-Saff* that fighting in the cause of Allah is the highest obligation that is worthy of God's highest pleasure and approval. The Qur'an says:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَ فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُم بُنْيَٰنٌ مَّرْصُوصٌ

Truly Allah loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid structure. (*As-Saff* 61:4)

Let us take note of the following *Hadith* cited in *Sahih Muslim* and narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, who said that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

مَنْ مَّاتَ وَلَمْ يَغْزُ ، وَلَمْ يُحَدِّثْ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ ، مَاتَ عَلٰى شُعْبَةٍ مِّنَ النِّفَاقِ (رواہ مسلم: عن ابو ہریرۃ)

One who dies in a state that he did not fight in Allah's cause and he did not even wish that he should do so, he suffers from a sort of hypocrisy.

It is possible that some of the people participating in the struggle pass away to their eternal abode before the

final stage of armed confrontation arrives. Nevertheless, they should at least entertain this desire in their heart. If one has genuine faith, he should all along nurse the desire that he will lay down his life for establishing the system of Islam. Those devoid of this desire suffer from at least a shade of hypocrisy according to the teachings of our beloved Messenger (SAW).

The Second Pre-Requisite - To Join an Organization/Party

In addition to *Jihad,* another pre-requisite for fulfilling our Islamic duties is that one should join an organization that is working towards the establishment of Islam. No one can dare claim that fulfilling the three duties completely is possible by individual or personal struggle alone. It is beyond any doubt that these duties can be performed only provided there is an organized movement. Since worshipping God, obeying Him, acting as witnesses unto mankind, enjoining good and forbidding evil, enforcing Islam and making the obedience wholly for God's sake is obligatory, the pre-requisites are equally obligatory. Whatever is required for performing an Islamic duty is an equally important duty in itself. For example, offering the prayer is a duty and performing *wudu* is its pre-requisite, as described earlier in the beginning of this segment of our discussion. Just like *wudu* becomes a duty in order to fulfill the obligation of prayer, being in an organized collective endeavor becomes a duty in order to fulfill the obligation of establishing Islam. Another instance is of the *Ihram* for performing *Hajj* and *Umrah,* which is elevated into the genre of duties being the pre-requisite of religious obligations. Thus, if we agree in the overall framework of religious duties presented in this treatise, it is obligatory on each of us to join an appropriate group for discharging them. On the authority of Harith Al

`Ashari (RAA), it is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

اٰمُرُكُمْ بِخَمْسٍ : بِالْجَمَاعَةِ ، وَالسَّمْعِ ، وَالطَّاعَةِ ،
وَالْهِجْرَةِ ، وَالْجِهَادِ فِیْ سَبِیْلِ اللّٰهِ (رواہ احمد والترمذی)

> I declare obligatory upon you five things. They are: organization, listening, obeying, making *Hijrah*, and making *Jihad* for the cause of Allah.

Hijrah, in essence, is to leave everything that is not approved by God. This is mentioned in one of the *Hadith* of the Prophet (SAW):

قَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ اَیُّ الْهِجْرَةِ اَفْضَلُ
قَالَ اَنْ تَهْجُرَ مَا كَرِهَ رَبُّكَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
(رواہ النسائی عن عبد اللہ بن عمروؓ)

> Once the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was asked as to which form of *Hijrah* is most excellent, to which he replied: "That you give up whatever displeases your Lord."

Hence, one is obliged to leave all habits and practices that are disliked by his Lord, to the point of leaving his home and country of origin, which will then represent the highest degree of *Hijrah*, in the same sense as fighting in Allah's cause stands for the highest degree of *Jihad*. As for *Jihad*, we have already taken note of the point that *Jihad* in God's cause commences with the fighting against one's self and culminates with the actual fighting in the battlefield. According to the above *Hadith*, both *Hijrah* and *Jihad* are obligatory on every believer, and it is

apparent from the wordings in the narration that these must be performed not only as individuals but in an organized and collective manner. It is for every individual to assess whether he is a member of an organized collective effort working towards establishing Islam and taking its message to all of mankind. If one is a member of an organization working for public welfare, social service, mass education or professional interests, it does not qualify as an organization in the above sense, for Islam demands that Muslims join a group working actively and specifically for the ascendancy of Islam. As Iqbal says:

ہم تو جیتے ہیں کہ دنیا میں ترا نام رہے
کہیں ممکن ہے کہ ساقی نہ رہے' جام رہے

We live so that thy name remain in the land
How can the cup remain without the cup-bearer?

And,

مری زندگی کا مقصد ترے دیں کی سرفرازی
میں اسی لئے مسلماں' میں اسی لئے نمازی

The aim of my life is the dominance of Your Religion
For this I'm a Muslim, for this I'm one who prays

Let it also be realized that this organization should run on the Islamic principles of obedience to the leader, a point eloquently made in the above-quoted Prophetic saying. If one is not a member of such an organization, I must say that he betrays lack of concern for fulfilling his religious duties. Let it be pointed out that if one is not able to place his confidence in any group or leader because he finds none worthy of such a claim, it by no means absolves

him of his obligations to God. He must, then, make a call to others to join hands with him in the grand task of establishing Islam and taking its light to all peoples. If he does not find himself worthy or qualified to make such a call, then there is no justification for him to live in society, since ultimately his obedience will be of a system that is not in obedience to the Divine. This is a difficult point to swallow, but it is the only logical conclusion to what I have come across by way of the teachings of Islam, and it conforms to a *Hadith* in which the Prophet (SAW) advises those who do not find an appropriate organization with a leader to leave civilization and live the rest of their lives without participating in the institutions of society.

The Third Pre-Requisite - Baiy'ah or Pledge of Allegiance

The third pre-requisite for fulfilling our religious obligations is the method of organization that a group striving for the establishment of Islam should adopt, which is on the basis of the principle of *Baiy'ah* or personal allegiance to the leader. The Qur'an and *Sunnah* guide us to follow this principle. It is the only system of organization that we find mentioned in the Qur'an and practically adopted in the *Sunnah*. I have not been able to discover in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* any system other than that of *Baiy'ah* in the context of struggling to fulfill the aforementioned religious obligations, nor has anyone ever pointed one out any other system to me. Now let us try to understand first the meaning and implications of the *Baiy'ah*. It stands for establishing a link with a man through a pledge for performing his/her Islamic duties in an organized and disciplined manner. This *Baiy'ah* of *Jihad* signifies the pledge for performing such lofty Islamic duties as preaching Islam, spreading the message of Islam, acting as a witness unto mankind and striving for the establishment of Islam as a complete way of life backed by

civil authority and government. Included in it is the commitment to join an organization based on the principle of obedience to its leader (*ameer*) and the resolve to conduct *Jihad* and *Hijrah* under his leadership.

Our recent history has witnessed the movement launched by Syed Ahmad Shaheed in the Indian sub-continent - the "Tehreek-e-Shaheedain" (The Movement of the two Martyrs). It is named after Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed, who was the grandson of Shah Waliullah. Thousands of Muslims associated with this movement attained martyrdom (may God bless their pious souls). In the wake of this movement there was an armed conflict in the Indian sub-continent in the cause of God. Syed Ahmad Shaheed first took a pledge of allegiance for guidance (*Baiy`ah Al-Irshad*) and later he took the pledge for *Jihad*. The final stage of *Jihad* happened as part of this pledge in that many pious souls literally fought with their swords in the battlefield and attained martyrdom while fighting against the Sikh army, and consequently won Allah's immense pleasure and reward:

وَلَا تَقُولُوا۟ لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ أَمْوَٰتٌۢ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَآءٌ وَلَـٰكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ

> And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah; they are dead. Nay, they are living, though you do not perceive it. (Al-Baqarah 2:154)

The entire movement was based on the principle of the personal pledge taken by Syed Ahmed Shaheed. The term *Baiy'ah* has been abused much today, which is why it might bring bad images to peoples minds when I use it in the context of fulfilling religious obligations. The same holds true for the term *Mureed* (disciple). Many terms that are commonly used in reference to Islamic teachings have lost their original flair and comprehensive connotation

with the gradual decline of our religion over fourteen long centuries. Yet, this should not prevent us from attempting to clarify these terms and employing them in their correct and holistic usage. Our main concern is to revive and instill the real spirit of these terms into the life and blood of the *Ummah.*

Another noteworthy point is that it is generally perceived in the religious circles that if one has not pledged loyalty to a renowned religious figure, he may not satisfactorily perform his religious duties. Let me state with all the clarity as a matter of principle that this is most true for the *Baiy'ah* for *Jihad.* If one is not associated with someone for the purpose of *Jihad* for the fulfillment of the duties that I have spelled out at length with reference to the Qur'an and *Hadith,* then these duties cannot be discharged at all.

A crucial point that must be addressed at this juncture is that since no Prophet or infallible figure is amongst us, we will have to look among ourselves for a person and a group that is striving to perform these duties and is inviting others towards this end. If one is convinced about the intentions and integrity of such a person and group and in his/their understanding and sincerity, one is bound to join him/them in the struggle. I do not mind at all if hundreds and thousands of such organizations come into being, as long as they are sincerely working towards the same objective. In so far as they have a sound concept of the duties and are in accordance with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah,* it is immaterial how many such groups are working in this field for they are on their way to the same goal. It is not at all necessary that there be only one group in existence at any one time. Furthermore, it is not for the leaders of any of these groups to demand unconditional obedience, as was the case with the Messenger (SAW), since none of them are Prophets. Obedience to the leaders

of these groups will be conditional on their remaining within the limits of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah.* A practical analogy for having multiple groups is the presence of numerous caravans moving from Mina to Arafat during the *Hajj.* Each group carries its own banner, yet they all head towards the same direction and are committed to the same goal. It is, therefore, immaterial that they are many in number. However, if it is felt that there are some groups that lack a sound concept of the duties or that they are heading in the wrong direction (or even opting for illegitimate short cuts that could possibly distract them from their goal), or even if the group members are not satisfied with the sincerity of their leader, it is imperative that they look for another leader or gather like-minded people together to form their own group. No one has a monopoly that forbids others to the right of organizing their own group and implementing their own understanding of Islam's mission and the methodology that is to be utilized for its achievement. There is nothing wrong in this arrangement, as long as the intention is pure and sincerity of purpose is there, there is no unnecessary wrangling with others, and there exists a distinct purpose of establishing Islam. If this is the case, then the multiplicity of such group is besides the point. The groups that are imbued with sincerity will eventually merge together.

Unfortunately, today the case is that people neither move themselves nor let others move. However, those who have committed sincerely to the cause of Islam should join a group that they consider is the best for achieving the ultimate objective of making Islam supreme. They must, however, keep their hearts and minds open to join another organization if they happen to find one that fulfills their requirements in a better fashion. Is it not the same that we do in our worldly dealings? If one embarks upon a particular trade in business and fails to do well, he

immediately changes his trade and tries his luck elsewhere. This is normal human behavior that should be displayed in matters of faith as well if there is a commitment to succeed.

Conclusion

I have clearly laid out six salient points that bring out the comprehensive, clear concept of our duties as Muslims. Further details may be added to this description for I have merely provided a sketch or a synopsis. In the absence of a sound concept of these duties, we might be practicing Islam only partially, which could end up being unacceptable in the end. It is imperative that we formulate a complete and comprehensive concept of the requirements that Islam places before us and follow it by taking appropriate and concerted action. If one pursues the path with his eyes set on the ultimate objective, he will not be held responsible for not fulfilling his duties even if he fails to reach his goal in this world, for the ultimate objective is not to succeed here, but to fulfill our obligations by striving towards them with the best of our abilities and earning God's pleasure. As mentioned in the very beginning, in Islam actions are judged by intentions. God will recompense us with reference to our intentions. Whoever left his home to migrate to Madinah desiring the pleasure of God and showing obedience to the Prophet (SAW), he will be reckoned as a *Muhajir,* whether he manages to reach Madinah or not. The Qur'an says that whoever emigrates with the intention of *Hijrah* and dies on the way will be rewarded in full by God:

﴿وَمَن يُهَاجِرْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ مُرَٰغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَن
يَخْرُجْ مِنۢ بَيْتِهِۦ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ ٱلْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ
وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُۥ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

> He who forsakes his home in the cause of Allah, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious: should he die as a refugee from home for Allah and His Messenger, his reward becomes due and sure with Allah: and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (*Al-Nisa* 4:100)

In short, whoever intends to perform *Hijrah* is assured for his reward. At the stage of embarking upon this venture, it cannot be said with certainty whether one will realize the final goal. For example, the activists in the movements launched by Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed did not succeed (apparently) and instead lost their lives in the process. However, they are destined to attain success and prosperity in the Hereafter. Had the above-mentioned movement been a success, the whole Indian sub-continent or at least the present territory of Pakistan would have certainly been transformed into an abode of Islam. You may not be aware of the role of those who sabotaged this movement. The Sikhs alone could not have thwarted it by themselves. There were some among the Muslims themselves who regrettably destroyed this movement by betraying their fellow brethren.

The ultimate objective of a true Muslim is to gain Divine pleasure and attain success on the Day of Judgment. For achieving this objective we get detailed guidance from Qur'an and *Sunnah* regarding our religious obligations, which may be described with reference to the following three important terms: (1) Personal enslavement to God, (2) Acting as witnesses unto all of mankind, and (3) Establishing the system of social justice of Islam. We have clearly spelled out the pre-requisites of these duties at length. Of these, *Jihad* in God's cause and joining a collective and organized effort (organized on the basis of *Baiy`ah*) under one leadership of a single *Ameer* in whom complete confidence can be vested (without compromising on the limits of the *Shari`ah*) is essential. May God give us

the strength and the ability to make up our minds firmly to perform these duties. May God grant us the strength to initiate steps for progressing towards this end. All strength and ability are from Allah Almighty alone. I seek Allah's forgiveness for all Muslims, males and females, and in conclusion I praise God who is the Lord of the worlds!

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The Sole Aim Before

The Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an Lahore

Is to Disseminate and Propagate the Knowledge and Wisdom of

The Holy Qur'an

(The Foundation-Head of Faith and Enlightenment)

On a Vast Scale and at the Highest Intellectual Level
So as to Achieve

The Revitalization of Faith

Among the Muslims in General and Their Intelligentsia in Particular
With the Ultimate Objective of Bringing About an

Islamic Renaissance

And Ushering in, for the Second Time in History, the Blessed Era
in Which the True Islamic Way of Life Reigned Supreme

وَمَا النَّصْرُ اِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ